221 If the weather had been favorable and the tax gatherer not unduly rapacious, the farmer might retain enough grain to see his family through to the next harvest. If things had gone badly, a grim winter season lay ahead. Winter was in any case the time for repairing farm implements, weaving thatch, repairing buildings, spinning and weaving rough cloth, and doing other household chores. With the approach of the New Year the farmer might look forward to some festivity, perhaps to slaughtering the family pig; if debt loomed large, the pig might have to be sold to help pay the bills.[4]

769 796 The farm year,[5] toilsome in north and south alike, is punctuated by other activities and festivals which relieve some of the monotony of the long seasons of work. The first of the annual festivals after the New Year is that of Ch'ing-ming which corresponds in time to the Western Easter. Like Easter, the Ch'ing-ming observance was one a spring fertility festival. At this time, the ties of the living and dead members of the family and clan are celebrated; the family or clan graveyard is swept and food offerings are made to the dead. The performance of those duties is often made the occasion for a family picnic at the graveyard. All relatives make special efforts to join in this annual celebration of family solidarity, and the outing is a pleasant relief from winter and indoor work.[6]

4. J. L. Buck's study of 16,786 farms showed 39 per cent were in debt from 1929-32. Cited in Lang, Chinese Family and Society, New Haven, 1946, p. 69.

[5 and 6 next page]

796 On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month is the Dragon Boat Festival. This is of southern origin and is traced by Eberhard to the human sacrificial rites of the Tai aborigines of south China.[7] In modern times it has been somewhat less popular in the north than in the south. It is in the south that the dragon boat races were held on rivers and lakes. For most rural families the festival meant somewhat better food than usual and particularly the steamed rice dumplings known as tsung-tzu, symbolic of the rice sacrifices made on this occasion to the shade of Ch'ü Yüan -- ancient stateman and poet of the feudal state of Ch'u.

796 On the fifteen day of the seventh moon, 769 usually in late August, is the feast of souls, the primitive origin of which has been transmuted by Buddhist belief and symbolism. It is at once a festival for the souls of one's ancestors and a community salute to the dead. Ancestral graves

---

5. On the agricultural cycle of the year, see the excellent description in Gerald Winfield, China, the Land and the People, New York, 1948, pp. 34-61.

6. Wolfram Eberhard, Chinese Festivals, New York, 1942, pp. 113-27.

7. Eberhard, op. cit., pp. 69-96.

796 are cleared, sacrifices of food are made, and
769 paper replicas of desirable objects are burned. As a further salute to all the dead, lantern-lit boats are floated on some body of water to symbolize the community's concern that all the dead may be guided to the "other shore" -- a Buddhist metaphor for salvation. Many persons pay visits to nearby temples and pay for masses for the souls of the dead, particularly for the souls of the people in the community who died without descendants to commemorate their passing. At this festival, too, special food is prepared for the dead and for the living, and the farmers and their families enjoy leisure and conviviality.[8]

796 The mid-autumn festival is primarily a moon festival, and the ceremonies in honor of the moon carried out at moon-rise on this autumn night are full of the symbols of fertility and longevity. In modern times it has been mainly a festival of women, and the Old Man in the Moon is sacrificed to as the one who arranges all marriages on earth. The moon cakes, in the shape of the full moon, are one of the special delicacies of this season. This too was perhaps originally a fertility festival, and in some areas it is a popular time to make pilgrimages to nearby mountains.[9]

These are the festivals that have retained the most significance for the Chinese farmer into modern times. Many of them have changed

8. Eberhard, op. cit., pp. 129-33.
9. Ibid., pp. 97-112.

716 drastically through time, and we shall shortly see that the Chinese Communists are greatly altering the meaning and symbolism of those few which have been allowed to survive.

585 In addition to the annual festivals, the farmer's life of toil may be relieved by ceremonial family events. For a family with resources or the ability to borrow them, a wedding meant a great feast and ample wine; even the poorest families often went heavily into debt to make a marriage ceremony festive. Practical jokes were played on the bridegroom, traditional songs were sung, and the guests, particularly the men, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The 584 births of male children were often celebrated as 852 were the betrothals, and other milestones of family and individual life. In modern times the 529 government of the Republic of China decreed certain national holidays, but these were little observed by the farm villages.

536 In addition to these occasions for relaxation, 538 intermittent special events added interest and variety to the routine of village life. Itinerant dramatic troupes occasionally performed, and until very recently, the story teller frequently appeared on the village streets to spin out his tales to an impromptu audience. The election 622 of a village headman often involved political 788 maneuvering and a town meeting. Pilgrimages to famous mountains or shrines were often undertaken in the slack agricultural season for religious reasons or purely for relaxation.

selecting a suitable person from some other larger Temple for the position of ahung. 779 794

On Friday afternoon of every week a religious service is held, at which no woman is permitted to attend. There are no idols in the Temple, no music is used and absolute quietness is required from everyone except during the reading of the Koran. Before the service everyone must bathe, first washing the head and hands, then the body, and lastly the feet. There are certain public festivals to which women are admitted. On the twenty seventh day of the first month of the Chinese calendar every Mohammedan watches for the whole night as the Chinese do on New Year's Eve. Then there is the general meeting in memory of Mohammed at which everyone is present, and another meeting of the women and children who study the in the Temple in memory of the daughter of Mohammed. The Festivals are grand occasions for the members and great preparations are made and they are largely attended. The funeral servies are in charge of the ahung with the help of the elders. 779 796

The Temple is not only the centre for religious ceremonies, but also to a large extent a centre of the social life of the Mohammedan community. The elders not only help the ahung in the conducting of the services, but also look after the material welfare of the members, and there is very little poverty. The moral standard of the Mohammedans is very high and strictly adhered to by the members. It is the social unity of a community which makes the common life of the members possible, but the social unity of the 779 794

7: Gamble S-5 (1926-19? 1933 AF12 North China AF12

782 788 *511 families. For two-thirds of the families, the amount was less than 10 cents. The largest amount, $2.95, was spent by a family in the $40 group for candles for the New Year's celebration. One family reported the purchase of special candles to be lighted before the Kitchen God on the night of the twenty-third of the Twelfth Moon, the night he is burned and sent to heaven to make his report on the events of the year.

Nineteen families spent an average of 4 cents apiece for sesamum stalks, and 15 families a total of 28 cents for pine branches at New Year's time. Nine families bought firecrackers for the New Year's celebration. For two families, the amount was over $2. Five families spent from 8 to 10 coppers apiece for mugwort to hang over the door on the fifth of the Fifth Moon. The cost of the lotus lanterns set afloat in the moat on the fifteenth of the Seventh Moon, was 2 cents apiece. One family spent $4 for new clothes for the family gods.

Some foods, such as fruit for sacrifice and the special cakes eaten at festival time, seemed to be so closely connected with the religious life of the Chinese that the amounts spent for them have been put under religion, rather than food. Fruit to be set before the gods as part of the feasts offered them was the principal item. For most of the income groups the amount, per family reporting, was between $1.10 and $3.25, but for the groups below $30 it was less than 80 cents. For the $70 group, the average was $10.70. After the fruit had been offered to the gods, it was eaten by the families.

796 x 511 The special festival cakes are *nien kao*, made from glutinous rice flour, dates, bean flour and sugar; *yuan hsiao*, round balls of rice flour with a filling of melon seeds, can-

7: Gamble S-5 (1926-1927) 1933 AF12 North China AF12

died fruit, et cetera, eaten at New Year's time; *tsung-tzŭ,* balls of glutinous rice wrapped in leaves of reeds; cakes with likenesses on them of the "five poisonous insects"—viper, scorpion, centipede, toad and spider—used for the fifth of the Fifth Moon; moon cakes, eaten at the time of the Autumn Festival, the fifteenth of the Eighth Moon. Only 63 families bought cakes, and only two families bought them for all three festivals. It seems evident, therefore, that most of the families make their own festival cakes. The reported expenditure for all the different kinds of cakes averaged less than 25 cents per family, for the income groups below $70 a month. The maximum was $1.70 in the $175 group. This average was large, as one family in that group spent $4.80 for moon cakes to be offered to the god of the moon before they were eaten.

A special porridge, *la-pa-chou,* is eaten on the eighth of the Twelfth Moon to commemorate the day when the Goddess of Mercy left her home for the Buddhist convent. One family who gave us a complete list used over 20 ingredients—five different kinds of grain, beans, lily and melon seeds, peanuts, chestnuts, walnuts, apricot, peach and pine seeds, dates, green plums, sugar.

As all the members of only a few families were Christian, we were interested to see how many of the 59 families with one or more Christian members bought incense, paper money, festival cakes. Four families purchased incense; two bought paper money; 31 purchased festival cakes; and seven bought fruit for religious use. Nineteen of the 26 families who spent nothing for religion had one or more Christian members. Any money given to the church was classed as a contribution, rather than an expenditure for religion.